



U.S. Army Spc. Brendan Piper, a civil affairs specialist with the 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, carries a stubborn sheep to a needy family in Baghdad, Iraq, April 20, during Operation Sheep Drop. U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Dan Balda

Soldiers Shepherd Sheep to Needy Families

Team from 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion delivers sheep to Baghdad residents.

*By U.S. Army Pfc. Dan Balda
4th Brigade Combat Team*

BAGHDAD, Iraq, May 4, 2005 — Sgt. Luis Herrera, a fueller assigned to Forward Support Company, 4th Battalion 64th Armor Battalion, normally spends his days bringing ammunition and gas to soldiers in need.

The cargo he brought to needy residents of the al Sayiah and al Marouf districts April 20 was not bullets and gas.

Twenty-five sheep, driven around by a local butcher, were delivered to families that a civil affairs team had sought out a week before. These families had anywhere from 20 to 25 people living together under one roof and could use the help, said Staff Sgt. Daniel MacDonald, B Company, 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion team sergeant.

“These people have been hurting for a long time,” Herrera said. “It’s nice to give them something back in addition to freedom, which is not a bad thing by itself.”



An Iraqi woman is excited to receive a sheep for her family during Operation Sheep Drop April 20, 2005. Soldiers assigned to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division gave sheep to needy Baghdad families. U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Dan Balda

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out, there's never enough for everyone. You feel bad that you can't help everybody," Staff Sgt. Daniel MacDonald, B Company, 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion team sergeant.

The logistics of the operation was the easy part. The hard part was getting the stubborn sheep out of the back of the truck to the families.

MacDonald, a police officer from Philadelphia, has not had much hands-on contact with sheep in the past.

"It's definitely a new experience," MacDonald said. "I don't know if the sheep knew what was going on, but there was no way they were going to cooperate with going to the families."

Besides helping the residents, MacDonald enjoyed the comedy inherent in a bunch of city boys wrangling sheep.

"We got to see the look on the company commander's face when we told him he had to hand the first sheep out," MacDonald said. "That and the sheep bumping into the soldiers was pretty funny."

involved in the mission.

"The crowds were the only difficult part," MacDonald said. "There are a lot of poor needy people in Baghdad, and whenever you're giving stuff out, there's never enough for everyone. You feel bad that you can't help everybody."

Herrera, a native of New York, was glad to get outside the base and help the people he flew halfway around the world to protect.

"I want to come out here and do stuff like this as much as I can," Herrera said. "I just like meeting people, seeing how the rest of the world lives. Being away from home is hard, but seeing how the people live here, and you get to put a smile on their face, that makes it all worthwhile."

MacDonald would like to do something along the lines of donating sheep in the future.

"We could probably do it bigger and better next time if we get the chance," MacDonald said. "We all like handing the sheep out better than the other animal donations we've had. Donkeys and frozen chickens are a lot harder, believe me."